THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The objective of the National River Conservation Plan is to improve the water quality of the rivers through the implementation of the pollution abatement works like Interception and diversion works, Sewage treatment plants, low cost sanitation works, Electric crematoria and improved wood crematoria, River front development etc. In the light of the experience gained from these programmers, Government has discussed fresh strategies with the State Governments for cleaning rivers in various fora. Among the points deliberated are:

- Urban local bodies/States have the responsibility to create urban infrastructure so as to ensure that untreated sewage is not discharged into rivers and lakes.
- Additional resources may be generated for creation of such urban infrastructure by building into the external developmental costs, the cost of collection of sewage, its conveyance, treatment etc. Wherever new urban centres are developed and such costs should be built into the price of developed land.
- States may also consider exploring other means for raising resources for capital expenditure, such as, surcharge on property tax, stamp duty etc.
- Urban local bodies/State Governments need to further consider innovative ways for raising revenue for meeting the operation and maintenance costs by adopting measures, such as,
  - Levying user charges
  - Sale of sludge
  - Generation of power from bio-gas in sewage treatment plants
  - Creation of facilities for tourism.

Public participation and awareness programmes to generate awareness among the public for keeping water bodies clean, need to be also conducted simultaneously during implementation of pollution abatement schemes.

Basic facilities to forest guards

1870. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is not only acute shortage of forest guards but also lack of basic facilities such as arms, communication equipment, transport, etc. to confront sophisticated armed poacher; and

(b) if so, the details of forest guards guarding various forests with the type of basic facilities provided to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Generally, there is a shortage of frontline staff and also of equipment and other facilities for the staff. It is a fact that due to lack of basic facilities, the forest guards find it difficult to confront armed poachers. Forest guard, the grass root level functionary of the forest department is not equipped with adequate transportation and communication facilities to effectively and efficiently protect the forests. Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Integrated Forest Protection Scheme to provide financial assistance to State Governments for upgrading the infrastructure and basic facilities like communication, mobility and buildings etc. to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of forest staff including forest guards in the matter of protection of forests and wildlife.

Diversion of forest land to Government departments

1871. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed diversion of forest land to Government departments for developmental projects and providing public utility facilities;

(b) if so, the details of such land diverted especially in Andhra Pradesh, and the purpose thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken the conservation measures at the same time, and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Ministry of Environment and Forests approves diversion of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry activities including developmental projects executed by Government departments. 14 developmental projects of Government departments have been approved under the Act in Andhra Pradesh during last three years. The details of forest land diverted in respect